

27 August 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director (Plans)

ATTENTION :

SUBJECT : Assignment of Audio Surveillance Function

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1. Reference is made to Memorandum, dated 6 August 1951, from the Chief, Surveillance Branch, suggesting that the audio surveillance function be assigned to the Deputy Director (Plans) as a separate unit directly responsible to him. If this suggestion should prove to be impracticable from an administrative standpoint and it should be deemed necessary to assign this function either to OAD or to COMMO, then it is essential that a study be made to determine with which of the two offices its mission is most closely allied.

2. The proposed T/O of the newly formed Technical Services Office clearly indicates that it is being presented with the purpose of grouping under one office the various types of technical support required in the field. Since the surveillance function can definitely be established as a technical service, it would seem obvious that it should form a part of this office. To prove this point, one need only cite past operational problems which have required combined support of the Surveillance Branch and the Photographic Branch. Moreover, it is highly probable that as operations expand, surveillance itself will require continued support from the Documentation Branch and the proposed Furnishings and Equipment Division in order to carry out its mission. When a complex operational problem requiring one or more of these services arises, it is essential, for maximum efficiency, that the case officer be able to obtain a complete solution from within one office, thereby eliminating time-consuming, inter-office liaison.

3. For the past year, the Surveillance Branch, under OAD, has been establishing much needed routines, systems, and procedures to be used in obtaining surveillance support. These were devised for the purpose of facilitating and expediting support to the field. Since the field is just becoming accustomed to these procedures, it would not seem desirable at this time to create confusion by changing them to conform to new procedures which will necessarily have to be established if the Surveillance Branch is assigned to a different office.

4. It has been established from past experience that surveillance work, in order to be effective, must be performed by men thoroughly experienced in this field. Although the Communications Office may seem to offer field support to the extent that it has its technical personnel strategically located throughout the World, it must be borne in mind that these technicians have been so placed in order to carry out communications

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work for which they have been trained. If the responsibility for surveillance operations were to be placed upon them, it could mean little more to them than an unwanted additional burden. Consequently, any attempt to make use of communications personnel in the field to carry on surveillance work would tend to render ineffective any remedial program which may be established at this time.

5. While it is true that a communications technician may in some cases have a basic electronics background which might be similar to that required of a surveillance technician, this is, in fact, the only relationship a surveillance function may bear to a communications function. A similar opinion was expressed by the Communications Division in a Memorandum, dated 15 December 1949, which is submitted herewith as an attachment for review.

6. Obviously, any unit which is depended upon for support cannot effectively render this support if it finds itself in a constant state of transition. A change of administrative location usually results in a period of adjustment which is characterized by a considerable loss of time and efficiency. While it is recognized that in many cases changes are essential in a growing organization, it is felt that a certain degree of permanency must be attained for efficient operation.

7. It is hoped that the material presented here will be of value to the Deputy Director (Plans) in reaching a decision as to the final assignment of the audio surveillance function.

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Chief, Surveillance Branch

Attachment
Memo, 15 Dec. '49
fr. COMMO.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM - UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : ADSO

FROM : COMMO

SUBJECT: Electronic Surveillance

DATE: 15 December 1949

THIS DOCUMENT IS A
SOURCE REFERENCE IN
OC HISTORICAL PAPER
NO. OC-1, VOL. 2R

- DO NOT DESTROY -

1. A study of the equipment involved and the nature of work done by the Electronic Surveillance Unit indicates that this unit possibly should be a part of some Division of this Agency other than Communications. This is particularly true when it is considered that the actual mission of the OSO Communications Division is the provision and handling of RAPID communications.

2. When this definition of the mission of this Division is used, it becomes readily apparent that the obtaining of records electronically of conversations and discussions is not in any sense pertinent to rapid communications. The only possible connection with this Division that the Surveillance Unit can be said to have is the fact that electronic recording devices happen to use vacuum tubes and wires in their make-up. It appears that for this reason the handling of electronic surveillance fell by chance rather than design to the Engineering Section of the Communications Division.

3. After a discussion with [] it certainly appears that this Unit has more in common with the Operational Aids Division and its work could be more closely correlated with other Operational Aids activities if the Unit were transferred in toto to that Division. In connection with such a transfer, the following arrangements should be considered:

a. Setting up of slots in the T/O of the Operational Aids Division for 3 or 4 recording engineers.

b. The transfer of the three engineers presently occupying Radio Engineer slots in the Engineering Section to the OAD T/O.

c. Transfer of all surveillance equipment and projects, including research and development items, to the cognizance of the Chief of OAD.

d. An agreement in writing assuring the Chief of OAD that maintenance support will be furnished by technically competent members of the Communications Division in the field when required.

e. Modification of existing directives to transfer responsibility for surveillance activities within OSO from the Chief of COMMO to the Chief, OAD.

4. In view of the present reorganization of the Departmental T/Os, which is now in progress, it is suggested that this transfer of functions be taken into consideration in connection with this reorganization.

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NO CHANGE IN CLASS ☐☐ DECLASSIFIED

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DATE: 4/81

REVIEWER: []

Approved: []

/s/ []

17 August 1951

TO: Deputy Director (Plans)
Attention:

VIA: Assistant Director For Special Operations

FROM: Chief, PLANS/OSO

SUBJECT: Location and Effectiveness of the Technical Surveillance Function

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1. Reference is made to the memorandum dated 6 August 1951 concerning the above subject from Chief, Surveillance Branch, OAD, and to my conversation with you concerning this matter on 15 August 1951.

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2. CIA, and particularly the Office of Special Operations, has for a long time needed more effective facilities for microphone and telephone surveillance in support and facilitation of operations abroad. Unfortunately, at the present time the agency is not equipped to install a complicated technical surveillance in any given area in a minimum amount of time. The equipment available in field stations in many instances is inadequate, badly designed, and frequently not in operating condition.

3. There is no intent in this memorandum to criticize past performance as such, but I feel that any operations officer who has had broad experience with this problem will agree that our competence and facilities in this field at the present time leave a great deal to be desired.

4. The technical surveillance function was located in Communications for a considerable period of time and was transferred from Communications to OAD in January 1950. One of the basic reasons why this transfer was effected was the fact that the technical surveillance function had not been adequately developed and handled up to that time. It has not been adequately handled since then in OAD. One of the reasons for this has been that insufficient senior personnel, equipment, and facilities have been assigned to this function.

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5. Basically, providing certain factors are taken into consideration and the proper emphasis is placed on the technical surveillance function, this function can adequately be performed either by OAD or by Communications. It will not be performed adequately, however, by either unless it is given more senior personnel, better direction and greater stress than has been given in the past.

6. The opinion of the Chief, OAD, that there are strong reasons for transferring the function to Communications is generally concurred in by the Division and Staff Chiefs in OSO; in fact, the opinion of the Division and Staff Chiefs in OSO was secured by the Chief, OAD, before recommending the transfer of this function to Communications. It is felt that there are the following cogent reasons for placing this function within Communications:

- (a) Communications has an extensive field and support structure not possessed by OAD.
- (b) Communications has laboratory, engineering, research and technical assets in the field of electrical equipment which are not possessed by OAD and which are closely related in many ways to the technical problems raised by telephone and microphone surveillances.
- (c) The technical training given to Communications personnel should increase their ability to support technical surveillance work in the field.
- (d) Communications installations in the field provide secure and adaptable areas for the storage, repair, and servicing of the technical equipment necessary for such surveillances.

7. If the transfer of this function to Communications is confirmed, it is vital that the function be given sufficient autonomy and stress in the form of the creation of a separate unit responsible to the Chief, Communications. The function of developing and maintaining at all times adequate equipment, techniques, and trained personnel should be clearly assigned so that in any area the necessary technical surveillance support to any operation can be provided immediately. It is not believed that the technical surveillance function can adequately be performed if it is assigned as an appendage to some extant unit of Communications, having other and perhaps larger responsibilities.

8. Another factor worthy of considerable consideration is the fact that in the past the T/O for this function always has been unrealistic in both numbers and grades. Good technical surveillance men are rare. For them to be really effective they must have maturity, some operational or related experience, and considerable presence of mind and good judgment. The installation of a technical surveillance is a highly sensitive matter, the discovery of which can lead to the gravest repercussions.

9. Past experience indicates that the unfortunate repercussions of "blown" technical surveillance operations are frequently not so much due to the actual discovery of the operation as to ill-considered and frantic action taken by the officers involved after, or at the time of, the discovery. In view of these factors, there is a grave risk in attempting to use too junior personnel for the performance of technical surveillance functions.

Recommendations: It is recommended that (1) the technical surveillance function be transferred from OAD to Communications and that a separate unit of Communications, directly responsible to the Chief, Communications, be established to handle this function; (2) this unit be given a definitive, detailed statement of its responsibilities for developing and maintaining full competence in all areas for the support of operations by the use of technical surveillances; (3) a sufficiently realistic T/O be established to permit recruitment of the necessary senior personnel, under the direction of a mature, well-qualified and experienced officer. No detailed comments are being submitted on the T/O proposed in the reference memorandum of 6 August, although it is noted that this T/O is more realistic than past T/O's.

cc: Chief, OAD
Chief, COMMO